

Description of a New *Melithreptus* from Western Australia.

BY A. W. MILLIGAN, PERTH.

DURING an expedition undertaken by myself, in conjunction with Dr. Morrison, the Government Botanist, and Mr. Conigrave, of the Perth Museum, in the Stirling Ranges, in the south-east portion of this State, I shot three Honey-eaters in the flowering scrubs at the foot of Mount Mongerup. They appeared at first sight to be the Brown-headed Honey-eater, *Melithreptus brevirostris*, Vig. and Hors, although I perceived, as I thought, differences from that species.

On my return to Perth I borrowed from Mr. A. G. Campbell, Melbourne, a skin of *M. brevirostris* shot at Myrning, in Victoria, and subsequent comparison with that bird and with the descriptions given by Gould and the British Museum Catalogue proved that my first perceptions were not altogether erroneous.

For the purposes of comparison it will perhaps be as well to give a specific description of three birds shot, and in which there is not any appreciable difference in any respect except that two were males, one a female. The description is as follows :—

Crown and sides of head blackish-grey—an occipital band from eye to eye, such band being distinct and white from eye to back of ear-covert, but only faintly perceptible, and impure white for the remainder. Below this band another parallel one, extending from ear-covert to ear-covert—the latter band being distinct and blackish-grey at beginning, but only faintly perceptible for the remainder; mantle, back, and upper tail coverts olive-yellow, like *M. chloropsis*, but with less yellow and not so intense; wings blackish-brown, edged with white; tail feathers blackish-brown externally washed with same colour as back; cheeks and sides of throat pure white, contrasting with blackish sides of head, and with the chin, middle of throat, and chest, which are respectively blackish, shading into ashy-grey; breast, abdomen, and under tail coverts a shade between cream and impure white, the colour deepening on abdomen and under tail coverts; axillaries and shoulder edges and remiges white, a little cream colour showing in places; bare spaces surrounding the eye a light orange colour, excepting lower portion of eyelid below the orange zone, which shows bluish-emerald; bill dark brown, legs and feet reddish orange. Total length, 5.25; wing, 2.7; tail, 2.0; tarsus, .65; culmen, .4.

The Victorian bird corresponded with the descriptions in the British Museum Catalogue, but not with the western species.

The specific differences between them, briefly summarized, are—(a) the new bird is less robust generally, and the bill in particular is shorter and more slender; (b) the bare spaces surrounding the eye are orange and bluish-emerald; (c) the

blackish chin is distinctly marked, as also the greyish breast; (*d*) the cheeks are white; and (*e*) the head is blackish brown.

I therefore assign to the new bird the scientific name of *Melithreptus leucogenys*, and the vernacular name of the Western Brown-headed Honey-eater.

Some Notes from the Geelong and Otway Districts.

BY H. E. HILL.

THESE notes have been made at odd times when I have been in this district during the last ten years. There will, therefore, be noticed numerous gaps—*e.g.*, in the sea birds and water birds generally. But as I am not likely to add to them for a considerable time, it is perhaps as well to get them together in case there should be any items which may be of use to others. I have included all my notes made anywhere near Geelong, so that the ground covered includes a considerable part of the Otway Forest and a fairly large extent of the plains around Geelong. A complete census of the birds of the plains would number about 250, according to my own reckoning.

THE WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE (*Uroaëtus audax*).—Although common on the plains and in the forest country both, this bird is not very often seen within 10 miles of the town, but it does occur occasionally. A specimen was shot at the Corio Cricket Ground on 9th May last.

THE WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE (*Haliaëtus leucogaster*).—Occurs along the coast.

WHISTLING EAGLE (*Haliastur sphenurus*).—Rather uncommon.

BROWN HAWK (*Hieracidea orientalis*).—Fairly common.

KESTREL (*Cerchneis cenchroides*).—Common everywhere on the plains, but especially abundant on the edge of the Otways. Occasional in the more open parts of the forest itself, but never common. Breeding.

WHITE GOSHAWK (*Astur novæ-hollandiæ*).—Fairly common in the forest; rare on the plains.

GOSHAWK (*Astur approximans*).—Common on the plains.

SPARROW-HAWK (*Accipiter cirrhocephalus*).—Very rare.

HARRIER (*Circus gouldi*).—One of the Harriers is common throughout the plains, and probably both, but I have not identified the Spotted Harrier myself. *C. gouldi* breeds here.

LESSER MASKED OWL (*Strix delicatula*).—Occurs at long intervals.

BOOBOOK OWL (*Ninox boobook*).—Common in both the plains and forest country.

SPOTTED OWL (*Ninox maculata*).—Also occurs, but I do not know if it is common. I have only seen one or two.

OWLET NIGHTJAR (*Ægotheles novæ-hollandiæ*).—Not infrequent. Breeding.

FROGMOUTH (*Podargus strigoides*).—Common everywhere. Breeding.